(c) whether any scheme presently in operation in Andhra Pradesh to use BSNL employees in rural areas to sell mobile and other connections; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. However, BSNL has instituted special awards like Sanchar Sewa Padak, Sanchar Sarathi, Sanchar Shree, Sanchar Doot, Vishist Sewa Padak to appreciate and recognize good work done by staff. These awards are given annually and carry fixed amount of prize money as well.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

Lifelong mobile/telephone service

†2129. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some private telephone operators are advertising for providing lifelong mobile and telephone service;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the rules for such an advertisement;

(c) the manner in which telephone services of any telephone operator would be maintained under such an advertisement in case its service gets discontinued or its license gets cancelled prior to its expiry;

(d) whether it is also a fact that many top officers are not taking any action against the said companies despite having knowledge of the same; and

(e) Government's reaction in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (e) Yes, Sir. Several mobile operators have implemented tariff schemes under the name and style of lifetime validity wherein in lieu of an upfront payment the subscribers are being offered

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

lifetime validity subject to certain conditions. Such plans are suitable for subscribers who would like to have longer validity without having to pay recurring fixed monthly charges.

As per Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) Act, TRAI has been mandated to fix telecom tariff.

After due consultation process, TRAI has prescribed regulatory guidelines through the Telecommunication Tariff (Forty third Amendment) Order dated 21-03-2006 which *inter-alia* mandated:—

(i) The operators to continue to provide service in respect of Lifetime schemes as long as they have permission to provide such telecom service under the current license or renewed license;

(ii) Hike in any item of tariff during the specified validity period is prohibited; and

(iii) The service provider shall inform the subscribers of the month and year of expiry of its current license.

Currently, Telecom Operators are offering a number of alternative tariff plans targeted at different classes of subscribers. A consumer is free to choose from any of the available tariff plans suiting his usage profite. To ensure consumer transparency, TRAI has taken a number of measures and issued many Orders/Directions in this regard. TRAI *vide* Direction dated 14-07-2006 has also sought an yearly certificate of compliance from telecom service providers in respect of Directions issued by TRAI on tariff matters.

Operational phone towers in Bihar

2130. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of phone towers sanctioned in Katihar, Bihar during the last two years;

(b) whether the sanctioned towers have become operational;

(c) if so, the details thereof, location-wise;

(d) whether there is any provision for increasing the number of towers in this district in near future; and